

investment liberalization and promotion, development of the private sector, infrastructure enhancement, and economic and democratic reforms implemented by many Sub-Saharan African governments in recent years.

Working with the Congress, the U.S. private sector, the countries of Africa, and our other trading partners, the Administration looks forward to developing additional initiatives to promote trade, investment, and development in Africa.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; William V. Roth, Jr., chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and Bill Archer, chairman, and Charles B. Rangel, ranking member, House Committee on Ways and Means.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Dinner in New York City February 18, 1997

Thank you very much. First, let me thank Shelby and Katherine for taking us in tonight. I don't want to be adopted, but this makes the White House look like public housing. *[Laughter]* It is wonderful public housing. *[Laughter]* I really do appreciate their taking us in, and I thank all of you for coming.

And I thank Senator Leahy, Senator Biden, as well as Senators Kerrey and Torricelli. I thank you, Congressman Rangel, for being here. And I don't think—Senator Moynihan is not here anymore; he was here earlier.

I thank the people who are here from New York and New Jersey for the enormous victory you gave to Al Gore and to me on election day. It's the first time I've had a chance to say formally, thank you, here in this part of the world. I am very grateful. I also want to thank Bob Kerrey for agreeing to take on this job again and for what he said.

This has been an eventful time for our country. We just celebrated an Inauguration. We just had a very good State of the Union and response to it. We are working with Members of Congress in both parties on the right kind of balanced budget agreement. I'm working on the Middle East again and have some hope there. We just had the American Airlines strike deferred. And just a couple of days ago, our Trade Ambassador, Charlene Barshefsky, concluded a trade agreement that we believe will create a million new high-wage American jobs in the next

decade. It is a good time for the country, and we are moving in the right direction.

As I said at the State of the Union and I'd like to say again, what we're doing in a larger sense is preparing our country for a new century and a new millennium, and our goal ought to be to give more people than ever before the chance to live out their own dreams and to live in harmony with their brothers and sisters across racial and religious and ethnic lines and to make this country once again the greatest hope for freedom and peace and prosperity throughout the next century. That's the best thing, I think, not only for us but for the rest of the world.

And in order to do that, we need to understand very clearly why we're here today and what happened. The economy is better because we changed the economic policy of the country. We don't have trickle-down economics anymore; we've got investment economics. We brought the deficit down, expanded trade, invested in our people and our technology, and we have 11½ million jobs to show for it. We ought to be glad of that and proud of it.

We went beyond rhetoric and tough talk in crime and welfare reform. We had the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history and 5 years of dropping in crime. And people are actually beginning to conceive that their streets might be safe again. We put family and community not at the center of our talk but at the center of

our social policy with things like the Family and Medical Leave Act and the V-chip and the television ratings and the initiative against teen smoking.

And these things are making a difference in people's lives. And that's what happened in the election. We steadfastly stood against those who sought to use race or religion to divide the American people and took some pretty unpopular positions clear across the country in California on affirmative action and immigration initiatives. But the people of California stayed with us because they knew we were trying to bring out the best in the American people and we all have to go forward together.

And let me just say, finally, we rejected, I think conclusively, the dominant political theory of the last 16 years, which is that Government is the problem. It is not the problem. That is not true. Neither is it the salvation. But the market will not solve all the problems in the world, and the market will not solve all the problems of America. And that is one of the things that makes me a Democrat. Senator Kerrey and I talked for nearly an hour on the phone several weeks ago about it. And we believe the job of Government is to provide the conditions and the tools for people to solve their own problems, seize their own opportunities, and make the most of their own lives.

We have reduced the size of the Government more than our counterparts in the other party, reduced the size of regulation. We have led the way toward a lot of changes, through the Vice President's efforts, that needed to be made. But we do not believe that that which we do together through our Government is the enemy of America and its future. We believe we have to work together to make the most of the future. That's why we're here tonight.

And when we look ahead—I want to say something about what Bob said. I appreciate the fact that you came here knowing you might be targeted for the exercise of your constitutional right to stand up and support the people you believe in. And I thank you for being here. I thank you for being here.

You need to know, as people who invest in this, exactly what happened in the last election to the best of our ability to know it. I want you to know two things. Number one, for reasons I cannot explain or defend, our party did not check all the contributions that were given. Therefore, less than 2 percent of the total had

been returned either because they were not lawful or because they raised questions even though they were clearly lawful. They were not all illegal, but we just decided we didn't even want any questions raised about ours. All it did was get more questions raised, but we did it in good faith. And 99.9 percent of all the people who contributed to us—one million, I might add, in the last cycle—one million for the first time have not had their contributions questioned. Indeed, more than 99.9 percent.

So everything you have had to endure, including some of the calls you have received, have come because of what was done by less than one-tenth of one percent of the total number of contributors we had, involving less than 2 percent of the money we raised. But it was wrong not to check those contributions. And if your party had been doing its job, you wouldn't be hearing about all that today. That is everybody's responsibility, from me down, who didn't know about it and should have. But it will never happen again. You can rest assured.

And so we now have to ask ourselves, never mind about this, what is the right thing for the country? Here's why I believe we ought to pass campaign finance reform. I don't agree, as some people do, that a large contribution is automatically suspect and automatically compromises a public official. I don't agree with that. But I do agree that if it costs too much money for a party to do its business and for candidates to do theirs, that you have to raise so much money and it takes so much time to raise it, that it undermines the quality and erodes the independence of the political system. And I think all of you would agree with that.

And so what I want to ask you to do is to support a bipartisan solution to this. The McCain-Feingold bill, I think, is a good bill. It restricts the overall spending. It restricts the size of contributions. It leaves an even playing field between the parties and between challengers and incumbents. And it gives people a discount—candidates—for the cost of communicating over the airwaves, which is so terrifically expensive.

If we did that, we could all still come here, we could all still gather, we could all still give, we could all still do it, but we could do it knowing that our fellow citizens who cannot afford to come here tonight would think they were more equally represented in the political arena. And we could do so knowing that these people

that we support when they run and work hard—and keep in mind, my campaigns are over now, so I'm doing this on behalf of them—that we know that they can spend an appropriate amount of time going out and raising funds and listening to people and hearing out the concerns of people in their districts, their States, and their nations, but that it won't take all their time and it won't take all your time. Besides that, it won't cost you as much money. [Laughter] But the main thing is, it will be better for our country.

So if there's one group of people I would like to see in the forefront of advocating a reasonable bipartisan campaign finance reform, it is the contributors of the Democratic Party, the Democratic Committee, the Democratic Senatorial Committee, the Democratic House Committee, the people that helped me become President. So I ask you, please help me do that and give our own Members the courage they need to demand that our friends on the other side join us and do this. We need to just put this behind us.

The system was created in '74. It worked fine for us for a while. It's been overtaken by events. You understand it better than anybody else. You're on the receiving end of it. Help me pass campaign finance reform this year. I need your help, and I want you to do it.

The other thing I want to tell you is this: We have a chance this year to pass a balanced budget, to do some things in welfare reform that will really prove that we're not just being tough and talking and saying, people who can work, must work, but to actually give people a chance to work and to get an education. We have a chance to expand our trade networks, particularly in Latin America and Asia, in ways we never have before. The First Lady and our

daughter are about to go to Africa on a sweeping trip there.

We have a chance to pass significant improvements in health care for children. We have a chance to do a number of things in foreign affairs to make the world safer. We have a chance to deal with the entitlements problem for the next generation. All of this can be done this year.

It can only be done if I can maintain an atmosphere of both openness to members of the Republican Party who want to work with us and if the Democrats know that we are proceeding with conviction to prepare this country for the next century consistent with what we pledged to do in the election.

And what I want to ask you to do is to continue to give me your support in a constructive way. When we deal with these issues, if you have some suggestion, let me know. If you can mobilize support, do it. But just remember, every day is a day we're moving closer to a new century and a new millennium, and if we do our job, we will open the greatest period in American history. If we fail to do our job, our children and grandchildren should never forgive us. And if something happens that we don't do it in Washington, we ought to make sure it is not the responsibility of our Democrats in the Senate or the House or the White House.

Every day we get up and go to work there to try to make this country a better place. Ultimately, when you get right down to the bottom line, that is what you have supported and what I promise you you will continue to support. And I want you always to be proud of it and always to believe in it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9 p.m. at the residence of Shelby and Katherine Bryan.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Juvenile Crime in Boston, Massachusetts

February 19, 1997

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor, and let me thank all the panelists who are here and all of those who are in the audience, people who represent law enforcement

groups around America, people who represent the families who have suffered loss.

We are here today for a simple reason: Boston proves that we can take the streets back of our